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# cinefex

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## Behind the Lines of 'Enemy Mine' ..... 4

Although Barry Longyear's futuristic story of survival and friendship in an unwelcoming environment seemed an ideal film property, the process of bringing *Enemy Mine* to the screen would prove anything but ideal. The need for intricate alien makeups, bizarre scenery and dogfighting spacecraft automatically earmarked the project as an especially challenging one—rendered even more so by the replacement of the original director in mid-production. Ultimately, however, the film would come together under the direction of Wolfgang Petersen who orchestrated both the demanding live-action shoot and an international assemblage of multitalented effects people. *Article by Janine Pourroy.*

## Der Trickfilm—A Survey of German Special Effects ..... 38

During the opening years of the twentieth century, when the art of filmmaking was being developed on an international scale, the German cinema promptly established a singular identity for itself—an identity shaped largely by the fact that its prime innovators seemed possessed by an insatiable fascination with the fantastic. Tasked with subjects ranging from epic fantasy to futuristic science fiction, German technicians were among the first to explore and exploit the magical capabilities of the motion picture camera. *Article by Rolf Giesen.*

## Fright Night ..... 54

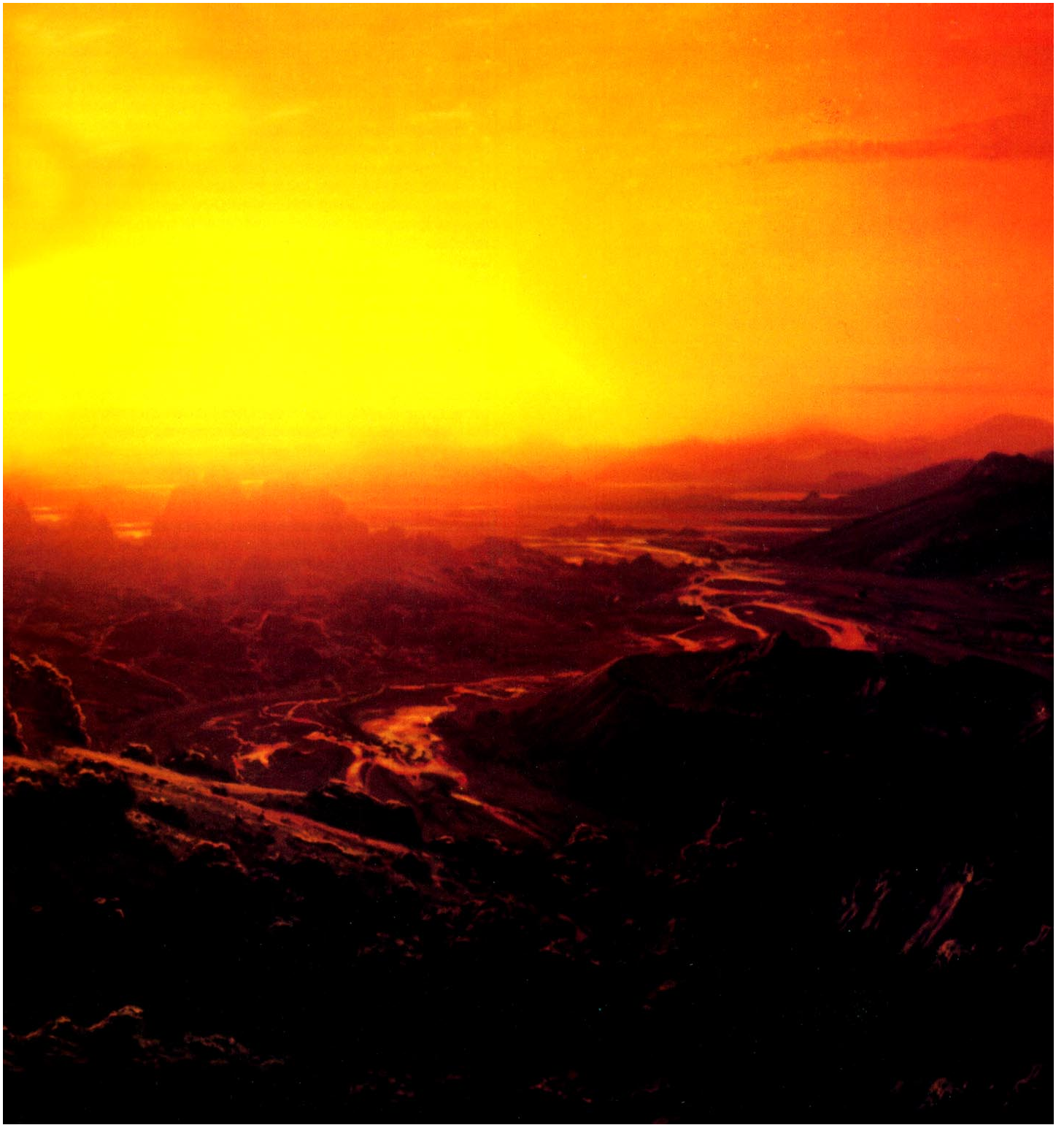
Writer-director Tom Holland conceived of *Fright Night* as a contemporary tribute to the traditional vampire film, complete with all affectations of the genre. But instead of employing the simplistic techniques of yore, Holland was determined to utilize state-of-the-art special effects to their fullest. Undaunted by a relatively meager budget, Holland and Columbia Pictures turned to Richard Edlund and Boss Film Corporation with a unique challenge to produce an array of high-quality illusions—everything from flying bats to snarling man-beasts—all for an unprecedented bargain price. *Article by Jennifer Benidt and Janine Pourroy.*

FRONT COVER—Jeriba Shigan, the alien Drac from *Enemy Mine*. Vampire Jerry Dandrige shows his ugly side in *Fright Night*. —BACK COVER





**BEHIND THE LINES OF  
ENEMY MINE**





where I basically served as director of photography. That experience was extremely useful because it gave me a lot of insight as to how I should proceed as supervisor. Of course, by the time I finished up with *Explorers* and became involved with *Enemy Mine*, Richard Loncraine had already begun working with some of our people and actually had the effects storyboards well underway with Dave Carson."

"The *Enemy Mine* project came in to ILM pretty much as others do," explained visual effects art director Dave Carson. "Richard Loncraine submitted his script to Tom Smith, who was then general manager, which I read and found interesting. I was working on *Star Trek III* at the time and Richard was running all over the world looking for locations and trying to get actors hired. I did some sketches and came up with some ideas on my own; and then, after a few initial meetings with Richard, went to Shepperton Studios in England and spent about two weeks going over the script with him and working out storyboards. That creative process worked well. Because the script was still in the rewrite stage, it was possible for Richard and me to sit down and come up with various approaches for the effects shots — and he could then incorporate our ideas into his rewrite notes for Ed Khmara."

Much of Loncraine's preproduction effort involved the creation of a visually harsh and barren environment for Fyrine IV. "Richard was very interested in establishing a stark contrast between the human's world and the alien's world," elaborated Carson. "And although we wouldn't actually see the alien's planet until the final shot of the film, we would perhaps be able to comprehend the Drac's culture as his character was revealed, and at the same time understand how dramatically it contrasted with Davidge's culture and the desolation of Fyrine IV. Richard wanted a very dirty, stark existence seen in all the footage of the humans, and also on the planet where the two enemies were stranded, which was to have been a very barren and unpleasant kind of place. Then, at the end of the film when we got to the planet Dracon, it would have been all blues and greens and very beautiful, and the contrast between the two cultures would have been made really clear."

Loncraine and Carson first focused on the film's opening dogfight sequence which was essential both for expository purposes and for setting the story in motion. "Richard's approach to the dogfight was that he wanted to avoid, as much as possible, having the camera tracking along with the space-ships," continued Carson. "It's become a very typical way of filming such shots and he was interested in trying something different. He was also always toying with how to do things more realistically. So we came up with something that we called the 'Indianapolis 500 approach' where, rather than having the camera follow the ship, it would remain stationary and instead follow the action as it flew by. I think that would have given the







vessel — were designed by John Bunker directors, and built by the ILM models ship, however, was constructed by the fl on location. "Richard felt very strongly I shot of the fighter coming through the cl on the planet needed to be done full-si; had the framework of a BTA ship built t would then plow into a pre-dug ditch on ship covered the whole chassis, and ther so that the nose would lower down in trench and throw up dirt and bits of del that it was a chancy thing, but he felt trade-off. Some of the movement might other hand a full-size BTA would be thro dirt and doing real-time landing and bi character actually jumping out of the fi to a stop."

While working with ILM on the film's Loncraine was also paying close attent essential to *Enemy Mine* — the developr for the Drac character. "We were still sh on *Gremlins*," recalled creature makeu "when I got an *Enemy Mine* script from was at Fox at the time. I really liked the was a special effects or makeup picture just happened to have those kinds of effi human interest story, and I thought il change the direction of science fiction fi crew to read it and they agreed, so we d the project. I flew to Los Angeles for Loncraine, whom I liked very much, and d which opened up a lot of discussion. H find an actor for the part of the Drac, a makeup would depend on whoever wa minimal work on the design. The major was October of 1983, and they were sch of the following year. So in the meanti and prepped the space and flew to Engla with the director and some of the peopl picture."

With only a few precious months to sp last announced. Dennis Quaid would pla Davidge while Academy Award-winner I essay the role of his alien counterpart. , alien was cast, it became possible for preliminary design work. "In the script, Drac was heavily reptilian — basically a pointed head and so on. But in discuss craine early on, we both agreed that

*An alien prototype, sculpted in England during the film's first incarnation, was to provide a starting point for early Drac concepts. / Louis Gossett models a multi-sectional prosthetic makeup during a preliminary test for Richard Loncraine. Chris Walas imbued this original design with a reptilian quality while maintaining its basic humanoid appearance. / Makeup artist and prosthetics expert Stephan DuPuis gives Gossett a finishing touch in the makeup trailer during location shooting in Iceland. The foam latex pieces — which had been run and prepainted at Walas' shop in Marin County — were applied and given final detailing on the set. / A rear view of the Loncraine version displays the cap's detail. / When Wolfgang Petersen assumed command, the Drac underwent considerable renovation. Responding to the director's desire for a more lizard-like creature, Walas developed an amphibian-based concept emplouing a modified*

Really incredible. That footage was very lyrical and yet very strongly real at the same time. But there were a lot of practical problems in dealing with Iceland. First of all, it is an extremely remote place. I don't think any of us Westerners realize how small the population is — only about a million people in the whole country, and half of them live in the capital city of Reykjavik. To make matters worse, we were filming on a small, even more remote, island off the south coast where there had been a volcanic eruption about eleven years earlier — with very sharp, rough terrain from the relatively fresh lava. On top of that, the weather was extremely changeable. It would be bright and sunny one minute and literally, twenty minutes later, a tremendous storm would move in. We had a lot of hailstorms, rain, snow and *incredible* windstorms. But Richard was well aware of these potential problems. They were a concern before the production even went to Iceland. He knew he'd have to film under any condition, so what he basically did was divide the scenes up accordingly. When it snowed, he'd turn the camera around to one angle and shoot a snow scene. When it hailed, he'd turn the camera the other way and shoot that. Unfortunately, one of the problems he didn't consider was that because we were filming on lava that was only ten or eleven years old, it was still hot underneath the ground. So after the snow or rain or hail had stopped, they'd set up a shot and then a tremendous amount of incredibly dense steam would come up and obliterate everything for half an hour."

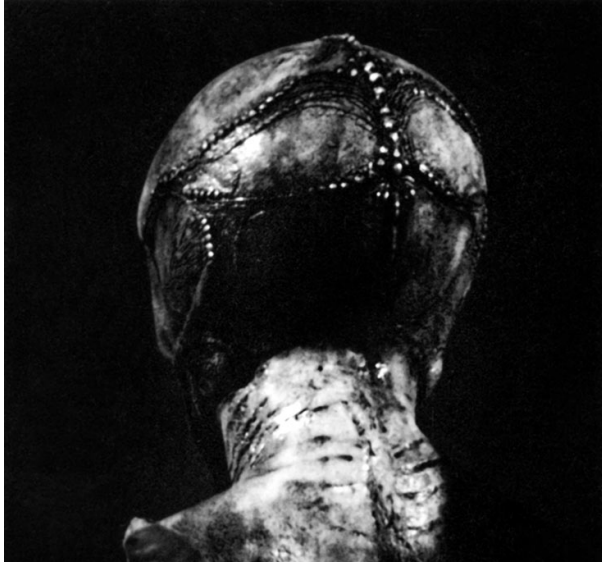
*Enemy Mine* was running seriously behind schedule. After four difficult weeks of location shooting, and with only two weeks remaining before studio photography was to commence in Budapest, officials at Fox — no longer confident that Loncraine was the man for the job — ordered an abrupt and immediate halt to production and a recall of cast and crew. For a while, the film was in limbo. In due course, however, Loncraine was dismissed and the directorial reins were proffered to Wolfgang Petersen — late of the critically acclaimed *Das Boot* and *The Neverending Story* — who accepted the assignment with the proviso that all vestiges of the Loncraine version be eradicated. With full endorsement from the studio, *Enemy Mine* was begun anew. Petersen's first move was to reroute the location shooting from Iceland to Lanzarote, a similarly configured volcanic island off the west coast of Africa in the Canary Islands. At the same time, he rejected outright the expansive and expensive sets standing virtually complete and ready to shoot in Budapest. Interiors would be shot instead at Bavaria Studios in Munich where a brand-new soundstage — largest in the world, in fact — would be constructed for the occasion and aptly christened 'Wolfgang Petersen Hall.' Though the script would remain essentially intact, nearly every other aspect of the production would undergo major alteration. For Richard Loncraine, all that re-





















A twenty-four-inch BTA miniature was shop supervisor Mike Fulmer and crew. "story — at least as far as we were affected much the same," commented Fulmer, "signs were decidedly different. The earlier was much more recognizable in comparison — sort of a stretched space shuttle contrast, the German BTA had some resemblance to the fighter design of World War II. It had a look — similar to the ME-262, which was only stretched and pounded a bit. It does that you actually start and get practically with a set of concepts only to have them and then pick up an entirely new set of about six months on the British rendition stopped production for about a month transition from Loncraine to Petersen. It all over again with the models."

The German redesign of the BTA brought to man-size rather than crew-size. "It's a pattern work," said Fulmer. "He's an expert maker, and makes things the old-fashioned eyeball. As long as he's got a three-view make it. The pattern was made primarily Wesley Seeds and Sean Casey then made was made as a two-part master, which mold — almost like a model kit. The bottom one half of the mold while the top half is half, and we didn't even take it out of armature into the bottom half, put all the it and then virtually just took the mold, epoxied it together and when it was cured unit out of the mold — which was a lot normally do. Then we just cut in certain wiring harness for the Molex connector. Engineering the mold properly was essential job on the patterns, but if you don't have who really takes the time to engineer them and key together properly, then you're pile of junk. It has to come apart right and be capable of flawless repeatability. Considering the purpose of making the model might as well make a one-off and forget this way because we frequently have versions of the same model and this means





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perched peacefully on a cliff at sunset abruptly interrupts their reverie. For this of actors Quaid and Gossett were shot Lanzarote. "After we finished up in Lanz "Randy Johnson and I went to Germar graph additional plates for the scene in ters are on the cliff and then run for a shower begins. In the conventional way, wouldn't have the characters silhouette *have* to have them backed up by the rock with a rear projection matte shot or even shot, matching to the sky is practically have clouds to work with, it's very difficult take the opportunity to do a very dramatic little characters silhouetted against a very sky. So we photographed them against a at the Bavaria Studios — which happens screen in the world — but it *still* wasn't nature of the shot is a big vista. For our all we needed to do was generate a background represented the two characters running. Wade Childress flashed this holdout in orange — sky colors — so that there was That made them look as if they were real and not just very dense black things running.

Using the black holdout matte as a special optical process, cameraman Childress was carefully maintaining a density that matched with — the cliff. "The shot with the matte on the Automatte camera, latent images taken over to the front projector where elements were front-projected into the meteors are synched to the action of the and running out of frame to escape the burned the scene's slowly setting sun into Automatte pass utilizing the machine's composite was then tied together with matte artist Sean Joyce. "The shot uses Joyce explained. "To that we added the the two men running — which we had then bipacked it in the Automatte. The number of passes to create the sun and d There's also rear-projected smoke and a some movement off in the corner. It's where you think, 'Maybe it's not real, but

The animated meteorite elements were matte painting later on in postproduction meteorites were going to be done by element and just repeating the move :

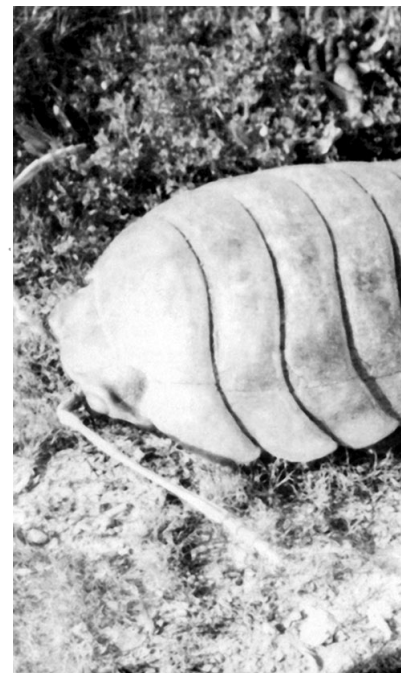


An original cuca for the Loncraine version of *Enemy Mine*. Fyrine IV's benign fauna — built over a modified radio-control tank chassis — went through a variety of concepts before the enlarged sow bug design was agreed upon. / When the cuca was reaccomplished to Petersen's specifications, the size and shape of the shell became a priority consideration as it was intended for use as a prop throughout the film. Walas crew members reworked the original chassis to accommodate the three-eyed, pseudopodial form. / The Fyrine IV predator on stage in Munich. Major hydraulics — hidden beneath the twenty-foot pit lair — were created by mechanical effects supervisor Bob MacDonald and supplied the beast's primary motivation. Cable operators positioned above handled the more refined movements. / Creature technicians James Isaac and Kelly Lepkowsky dress the predator's gaping jaws

problem with granularity and you really have to be careful about what type of shots you choose to do this way. If you were to use it for shots featuring a lot of flat areas or a cloudless blue sky or a face, you would surely have a grain problem. But in low-key scenes, or when there is a lot of texture, the method works out quite well. I'd say at least a dozen matte shots were done that way for *Enemy Mine*; and it worked out much better, I think, than the results we've achieved in the past."

For the ILM matte department, *Enemy Mine* became the means of demonstrating — and developing — the versatility of their collective talent. "Rarely do we have a really interactive involvement with the director of a film," Barron concluded. "Working with Wolfgang created the type of situation we're really excited about. When the matte department can get involved with the early aspects of filming in this kind of hands-on creative way, then — through brainstorming or being out on location — new ideas are born. On *Enemy Mine*, there were a lot of times we stayed very late and things got a bit zany back in the matte department. During one of these late-night sessions, while shooting a slate for our camera, we did a split-screen with Randy Johnson turning into a werewolf or something like that. It kind of broke up the tension of dailies and made everything a little more fun. Anyway, out of that sort of playful experimentation, we came up with a technique that we actually put into use on the production. For the shot where Davidge is in his crater while clouds are moving in from the left, we'd always had a problem getting the cotton clouds to appear the proper scale. We solved the problem by using some very interesting split-screens. It's nothing new to do a split-screen and have clouds moving at two different speeds; but in this case, we also flashed the background of the planet through the clouds. That way we had a cloud moving in at one percentage of exposure, then took the cloud out and double-exposed the background painting of the planet through that, making it possible to see the planet through the clouds. We'd never done split-screens in-camera that way because we'd never thought of it. But because we were interactively working with the split-screen we realized that we could actually just put a piece of black tape in front of the lens and shoot the clouds first, take it out and DX the background in. And I think it looks pretty interesting for clouds that are actually just cotton to be moving at different speed with that nice planet showing through — which is really what sells the shot. It was just one of those serendipitous accidents that happen through playing with the equipment and discovering new ways of doing things."

Discovering new ways of doing the film's other effects, meanwhile, was underway in Munich. Because Petersen had re-delegated a large proportion of the work from ILM to his own













bizarre appearance of his character, Gossett was able to create a convincing and sympathetic screen presence. "When you're dealing with something like the Drac," observed Ed Khmara, "you're essentially dealing with a man in a suit, no matter how you look at it. So it's the details that make the difference; and under Wolfgang's direction, a lot was done with the costume such as developing a specific body movement. Once you become acquainted with a character as an individual, you want to see through the makeup — you don't want the makeup to be there anymore. Of course, it had to be there; but you wanted to be able to see the individual, to look at the makeup as a face, and that was possible in *Enemy Mine*. Lou's performance was incredible. He used the makeup. It was flexible enough so you could see his expressions, but he also used it much in the way masks were once employed in the theatre. By the way he turned his head and used the movement of his head to reveal different angles, you got a different perspective on it — and that in itself became part of his performance. Lou was able to appear coy and somewhat feminine when that was called for and yet could appear quite angry and fearsome, too. It was really astounding. I was just floored by what he could do."

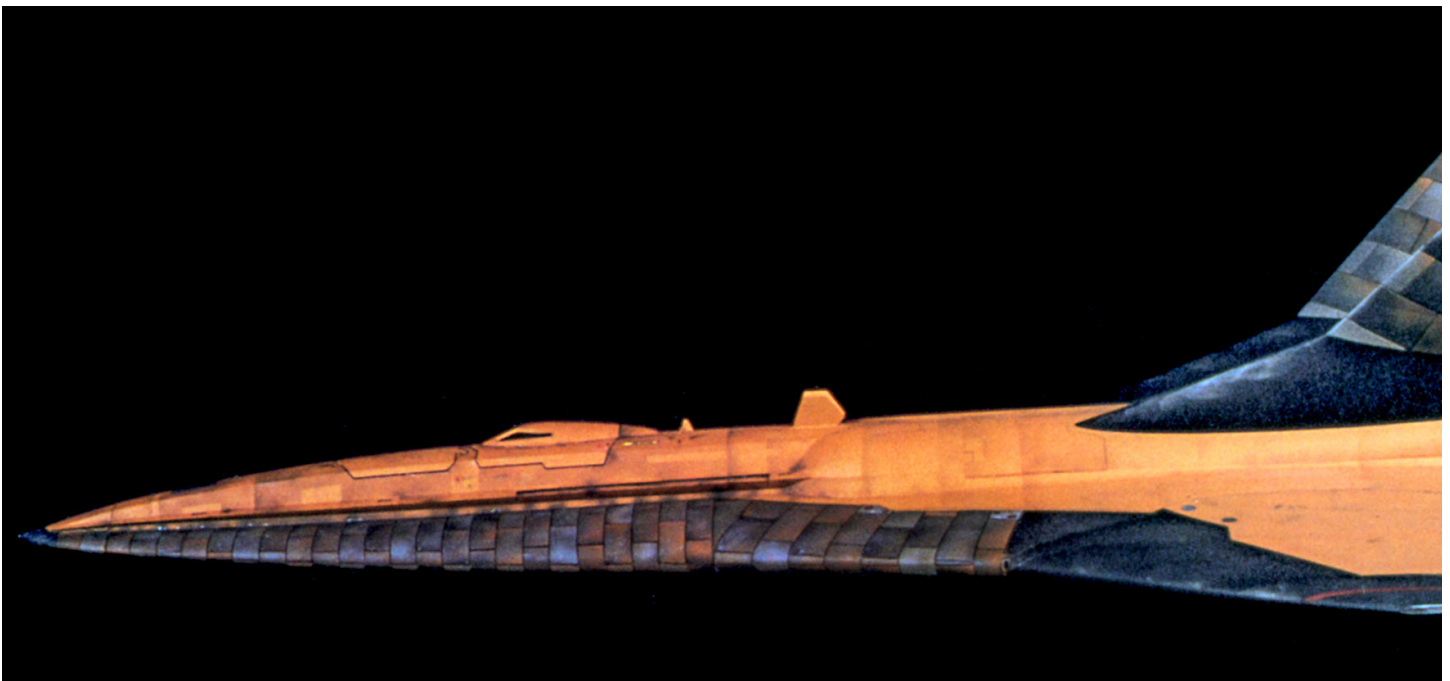
The Walas crew was also on hand to operate the Drac's moveable pregnant stomach appliance, used in a scene prior to the birth of Zammis. The rig, developed by Alan Peterson, was a combination of special bladders with a cable-operated tracking device that made a large form appear to move within the creature's belly. And while a ten-year-old actor was to play the role of the Drac's offspring at a slightly more mature age, the role of the newborn infant Zammis was enacted by a cable-controlled puppet. "The cable-controlled baby Zammis turned out really well," commented Chris Walas. "It was, however, difficult for us when filming the various cable scenes, because we just didn't have the same kinds of advantages going in that we did on *Gremlins*. On *Gremlins*, Joe Dante had worked with these intricate kinds of cable systems before and was aware of certain considerations. I don't think Wolfgang or his DP or the production designer were tremendously familiar with the technique, so the standard approach was for them to get the actors on the set, get the lights going and *then* say, 'Okay, bring your monsters in!' Of course, it's much better if we can get in there first and get out of everybody's way so that we know what we're dealing with. But it turned out really well. We worked out some nice moves and, as a matter of fact, the next day in dailies a woman who saw the footage was actually outraged. She thought we had taken a newborn child and put prosthetic makeup and a





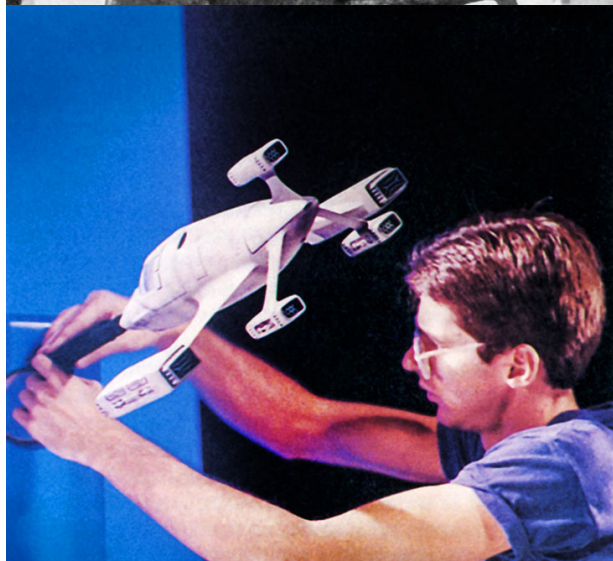
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The Walas crew was also on hand to operate the Drac's moveable pregnant stomach appliance, used in a scene prior to the









a few little hotels for the visitors, so Blair Clark and I — we were basically the crew — wound up having to work in an empty store front. And as far as setting up a shop, well, there was no electricity and we had to use packing crates for tables; so it was makeshift, at best. It was kind of like trying to shoot a movie without any equipment, basically. A lot of times we just scratched around and used whatever we could find to get the job done. We also had trouble trying to assemble a cable-operating crew. The production was supposedly going to bring some puppeteers over from Germany, but the expense of transporting an additional crew to Lanzarote proved too expensive so they didn't. We ended up having to use members of the crew — even the assistant director, the head of the wardrobe department and the accountant joined in to help us. So we had to teach people on the spot how to operate the cables properly. And it's really a delicate art because operating a creature is one thing, but giving it a life that reads on film is really a talent that a lot of people simply don't have. Given the circumstances, the impromptu crew did a really nice job. There were a couple of especially good shots that came across very well — which is not an easy thing to do. For this one little creature, we had about seven or eight people either stuck to a dolly cart on tracks or walking along beside Dennis Quaid who was carrying the Drac baby on his back."

Operating the cables for baby Zammis was additionally hindered by the marked absence of what has come to be considered standard issue for a puppeteer in these circumstances — video monitors. "It was *very* difficult working without monitors for reference," Walas continued. "And because the puppeteers were positioned so awkwardly — behind the actor or underneath a table, for example — we couldn't see, and had no idea of what we were doing. We were all stretching and trying to see as much as possible, but just couldn't. When you consider that it takes the operator's head and hand coordinating to make the puppet's jaw work, for instance, or its head to move or face to express emotion, it was very surprising that the character came across as well as it did. When you're operating your own particular cable, you tend to concentrate so much on your own little bit that you miss the whole. Later on, while looking at the footage in Munich, I noticed myself seeing this 'mechanism' eventually begin to look like a little baby, with similar kinds of movements — the leg kicking and the hand reaching out to grab something with its little fingers. It all started to come alive."

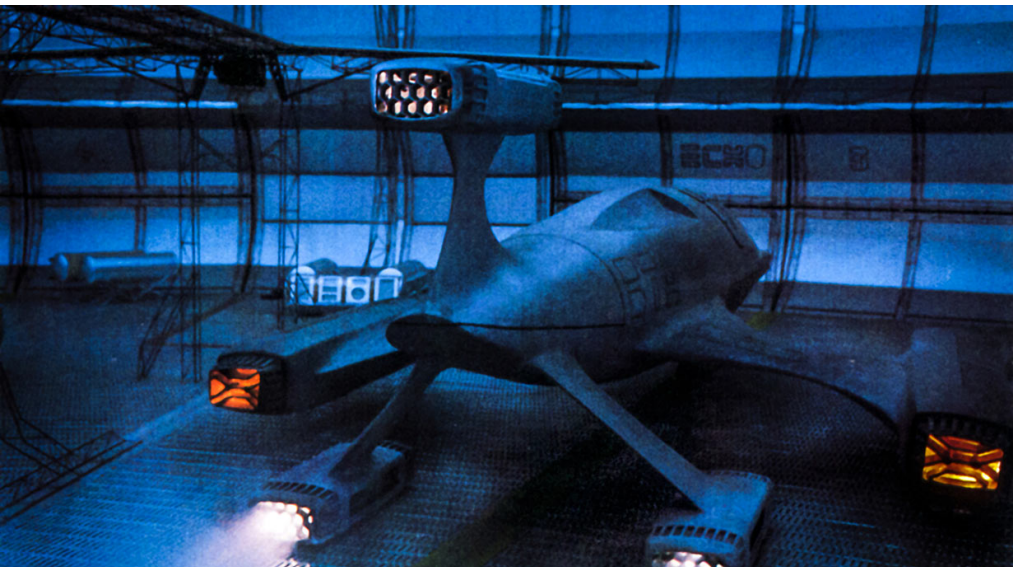
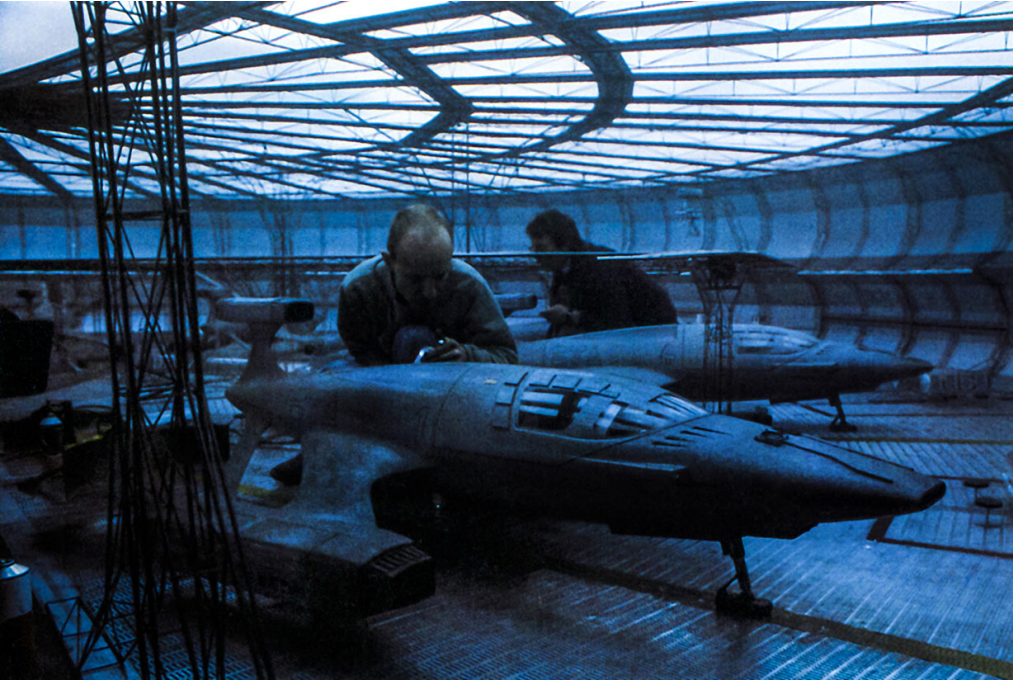
The radio-controlled baby Drac was used for long shots of Davidge and Zammis walking over Fyrine IV's rough terrain. "That little guy really took a beating. A radio-controlled puppet is a delicate instrument and while you make them as strong as you can, it's never strong enough — and this one was used a lot. So we spent many long nights repairing the puppet for the next

Early in ILM's model-making process, the Bilateral Spacecraft provided one of the art director's design space. Carson supervised the study to assemble an early Drac sketch. The earth's scrappy survive Peterse intact. ILM's vision design and We model: into on part ma facilitat photog equinn.

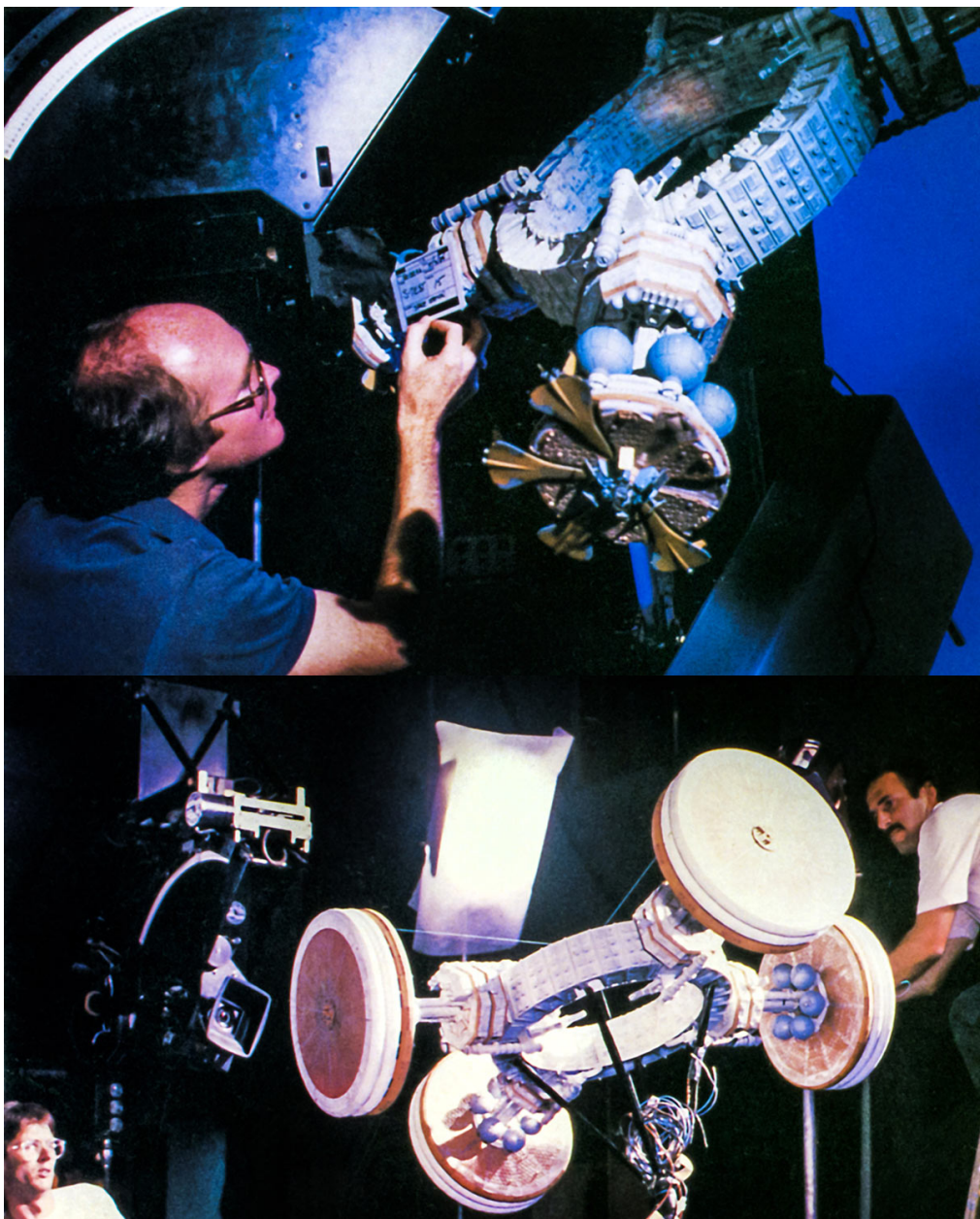


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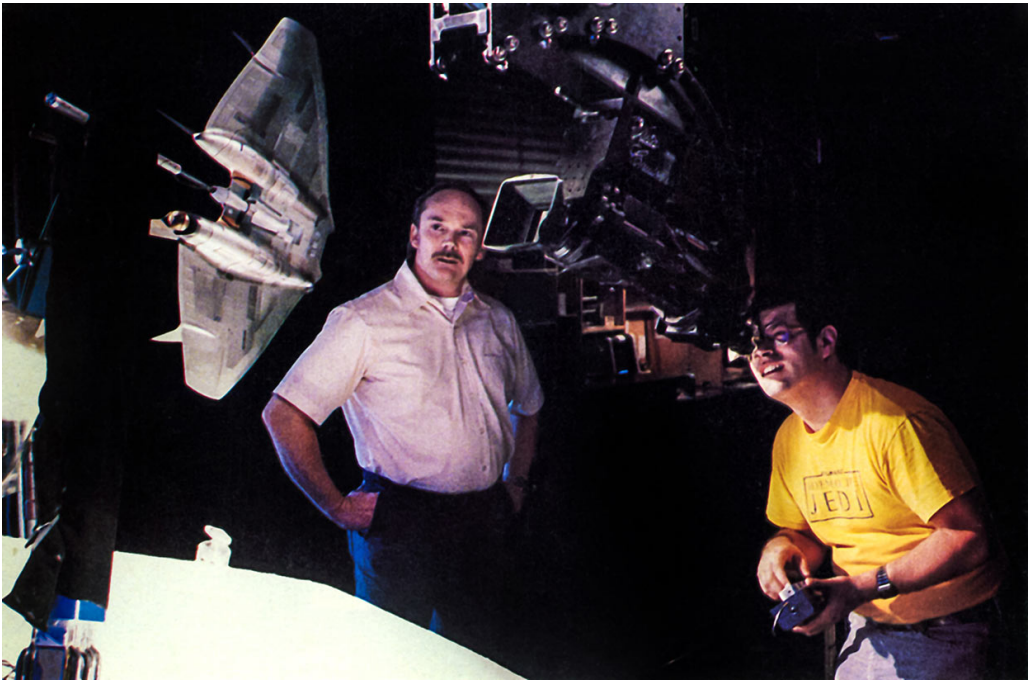
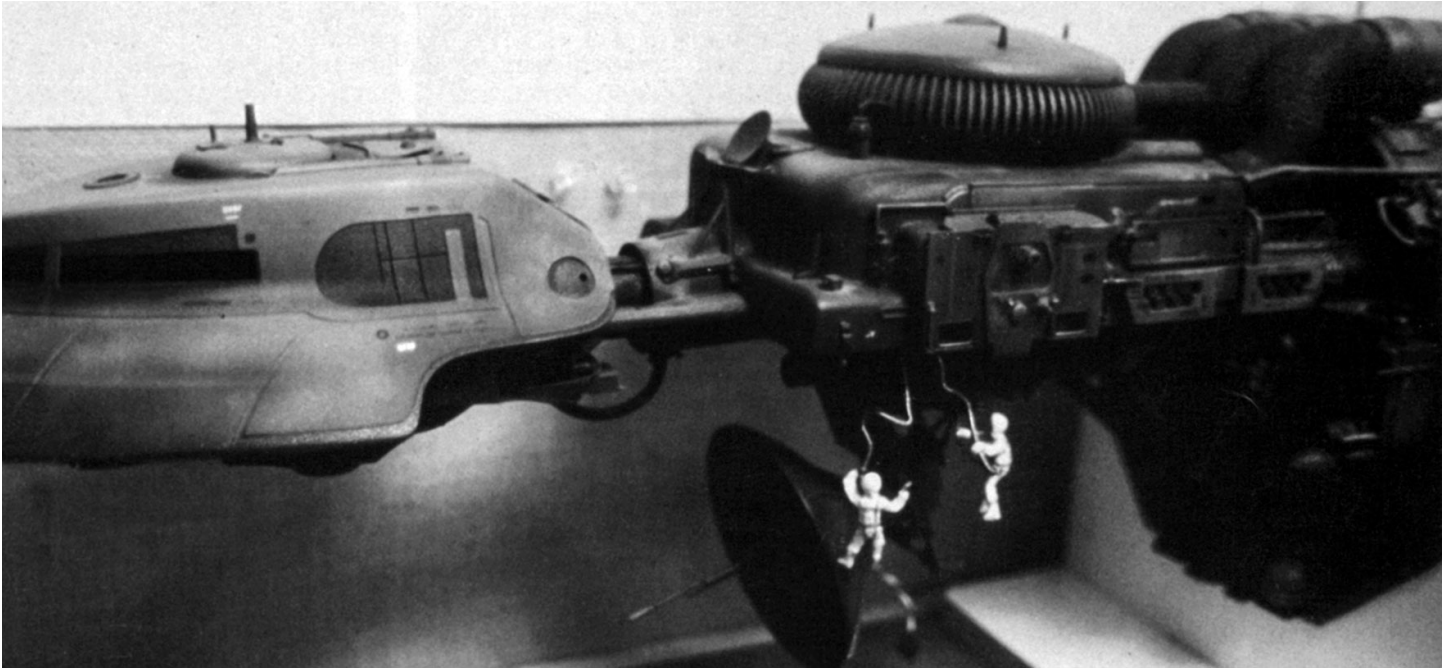




creature's redesign," said Chris Walas. "I assumed responsibility for all the regular show, which were considerable, so he and I went around like chickens with their heads cut off. The shoot on the predator ended up being pretty much the show, but by then everybody had lost their mind and gone through so many changes. 'Forget it, free overtime. We'll fit it in somehow. I had to get on film somehow. I actually went to the producer's office and said: 'Please, you've got to put this picture. At least film it. You can cut it out of the picture.' So the scene was shot and then it ended up in the picture after all."

Walas was also immediately involved in *Fyrine IV*'s native beasts — a small, slithering creature, there was supposed to be a sort of insect for a scene in which the Drac offered as a joke, and Davidge eats it out of his hand. By the time we got to *Enemy Mine IV* — picture at that point — they decided to go with the creature only a few days before the shoot. Unbeknownst to us, it had been coming. They had come up with something that I put the tentacles glued together. So I said, "Let's take care of it. Let us take care of it in Germany and came back home to re-design it. It changed *three* times between my arrival in San Francisco. We wound up with something quite intricately, complete with the Drac skewers it and offers the grub, says Davidge. We also made an edible version with pudding filling. By the time the grub they'd changed it around *again* and shot something else instead. Naturally, we finished film the grub looks fine, but it's slimy, white hot dog."

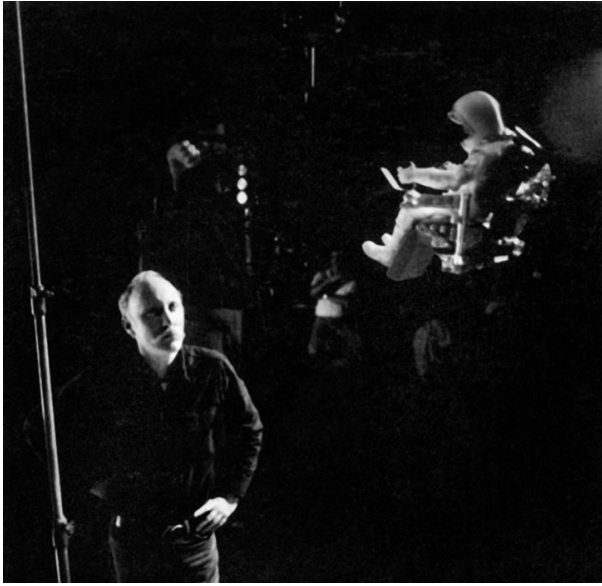
The awkward logistics of the internment also to *Enemy Mine*'s ILM-based crew, meanwhile, been shooting their portion. "Although ILM didn't have a crew in Munich, shooting of bluescreen material," comments Kimberlin, "the footage still worked out. Their own German experts, of course, but I learned in getting the right kind of communication."











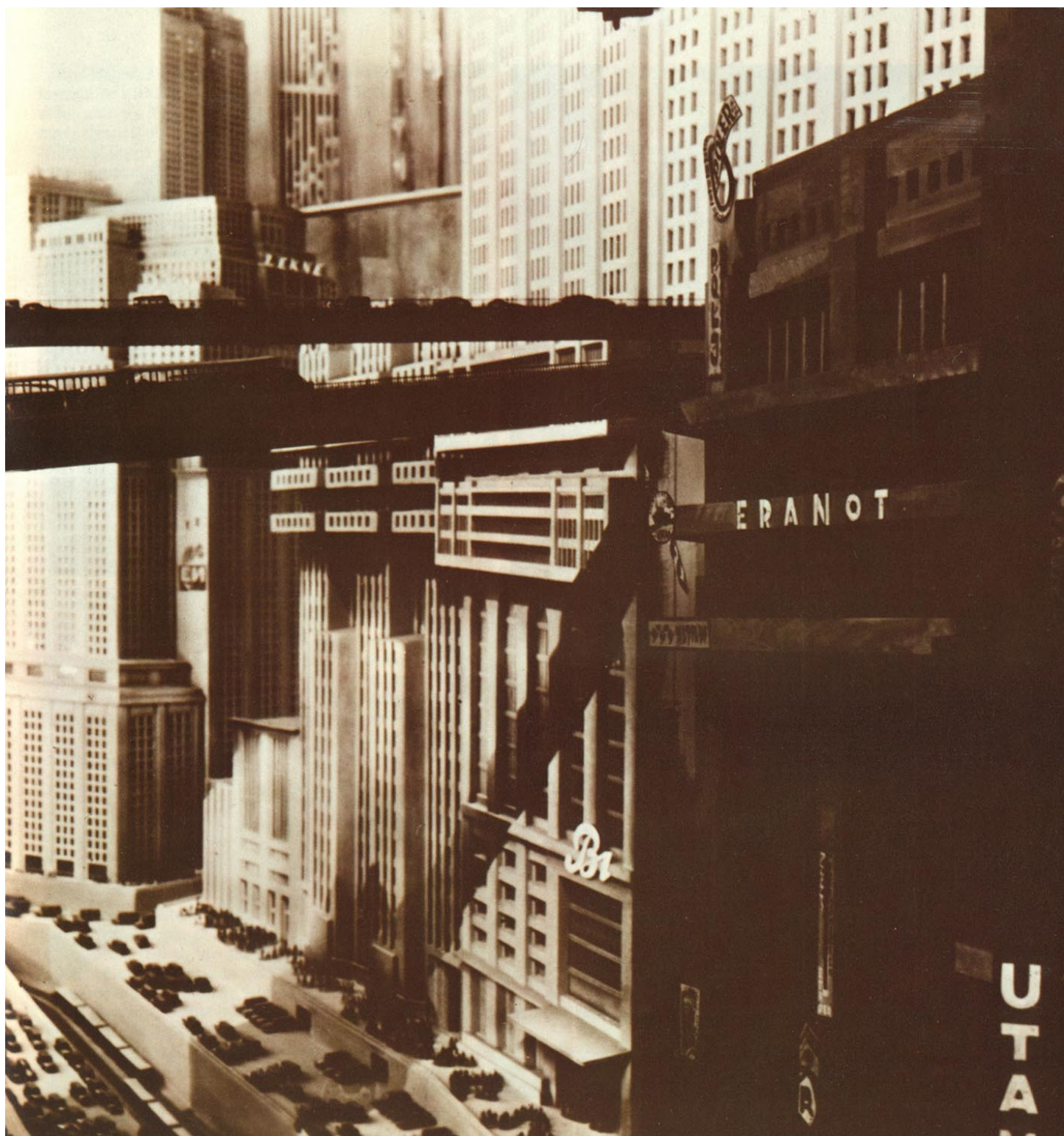


# DER TRICKFILM

A Survey of German Special Effects

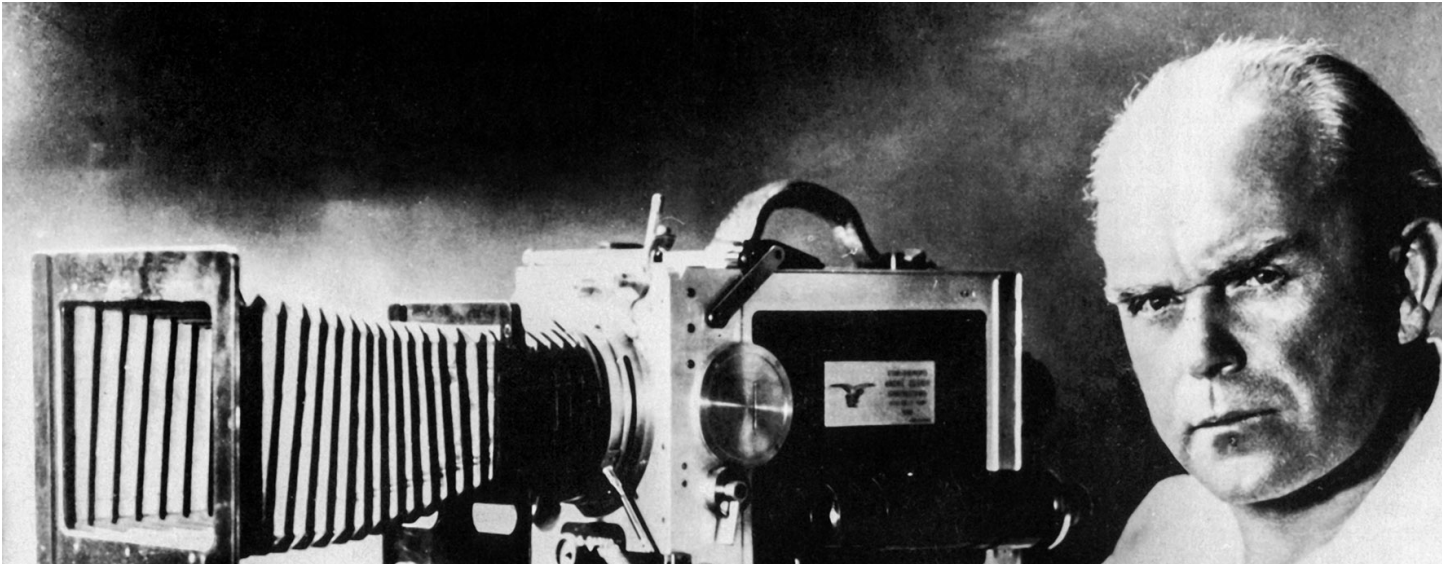
*article by*  
**Rolf Giesen**











convincingly.

The Shuftan process was not entirely new, however. In fact, some cinematographers expressed irritation upon learning that the technique had been patented. But Shuftan's method differed slightly — and significantly — from that of his predecessors. While earlier practitioners had attempted to conceal the outline of the mirror's selective silvering by aligning it *exactly* with that of the full-scale set — an approach which caused problems in blending — Shuftan preferred broad zones with gradual crossings between the two elements, using an irregular zigzag line which also served to cover any dissimilarities in the lighting. Although the patent was initially controlled solely by UFA and a joint-stock company specializing in the technique, American rights were quickly purchased by Carl Laemmle's Universal Pictures. Then, in 1926, the process became available to the world film industry through a company named Deutsche Spiegeltechnik (German Mirror Technique). While it had been Shuftan's aim to fully exploit the versatility of his process, in reality it was to become known chiefly as a revolution in production design, affording an economical alternative to the construction of large sets.

Fritz Lang would employ the process to such benefit in his 1926 spectacle, *Metropolis*. Assisted by cameraman Helmar Lerski and Ernst Kunstmann — who had helped develop the process — Shuftan executed numerous mirror shots designed to represent the complex above- and below-ground settings required for Lang's futuristic vision. Working once again with Erich Kettelhut, Otto Hunte and Karl Vollbrecht, the director also ordered a huge miniature of the city, complete with tiny airplanes and ground vehicles which would be painstakingly animated using stop-motion techniques. "From our tests," Kettelhut later recalled, "we knew that the aeroplanes had to be animated .6 inch after a single frame of film was exposed, the high-speed rail cars .4 inch, the automobiles about .3 inch and the pedestrians just minimally to get fluid movement in a believable tempo. An animation team was assembled by Edmund Ziehfuss, the modelmaker. Each man was assigned to a specific job. A blue light signaled the move. Cars, trains and pedestrians had to be animated conscientiously and for exactly the required distance. The aeroplanes were animated with the aid of wires. The work had to be done sometimes in uncomfortable positions since frontages and railway bridges and lamp sockets hindered our efforts enormously. When everybody had done his requested animation, the gaffer switched on full shooting light and another frame of film was exposed."

For certain scenes featuring the new Tower of Babel located

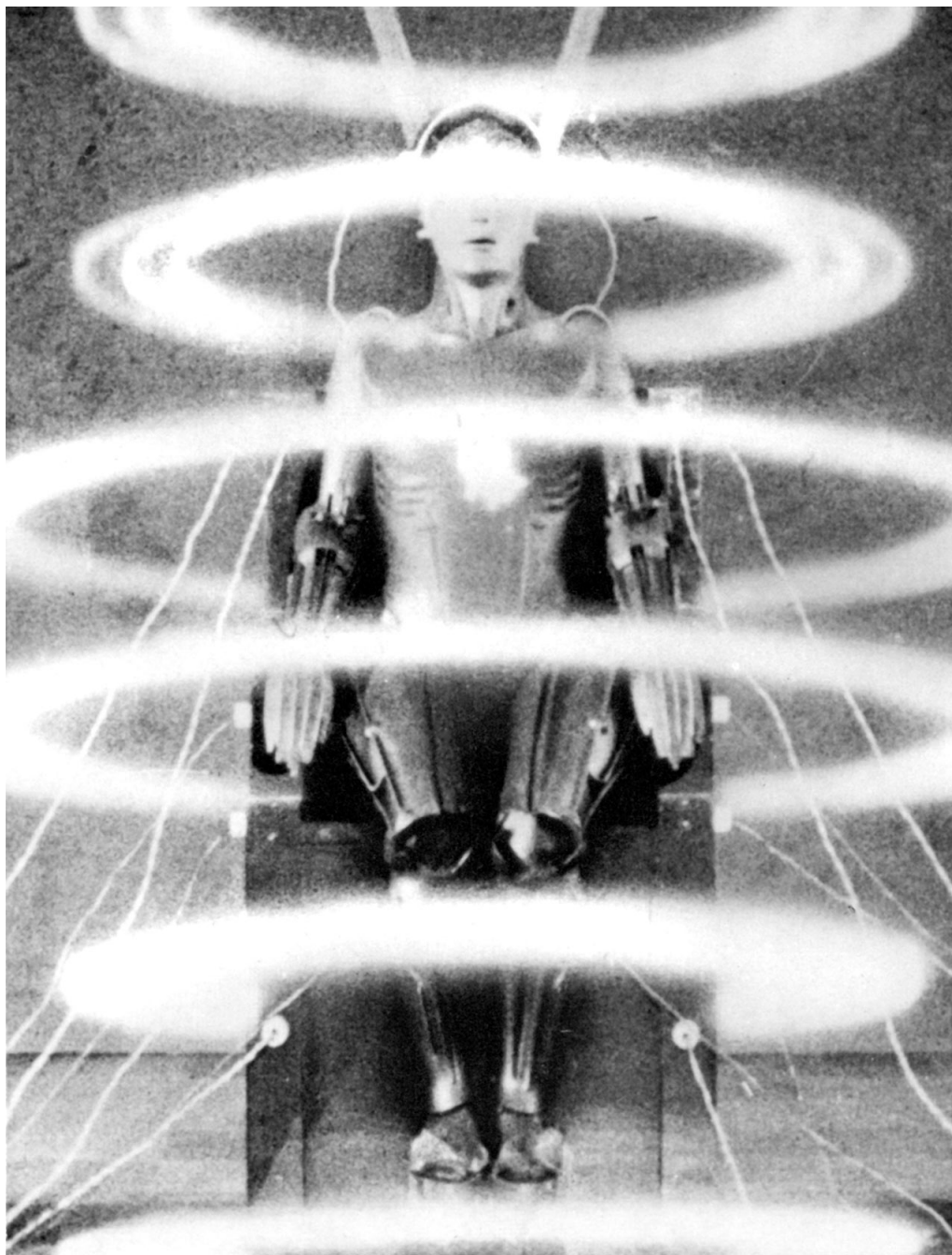


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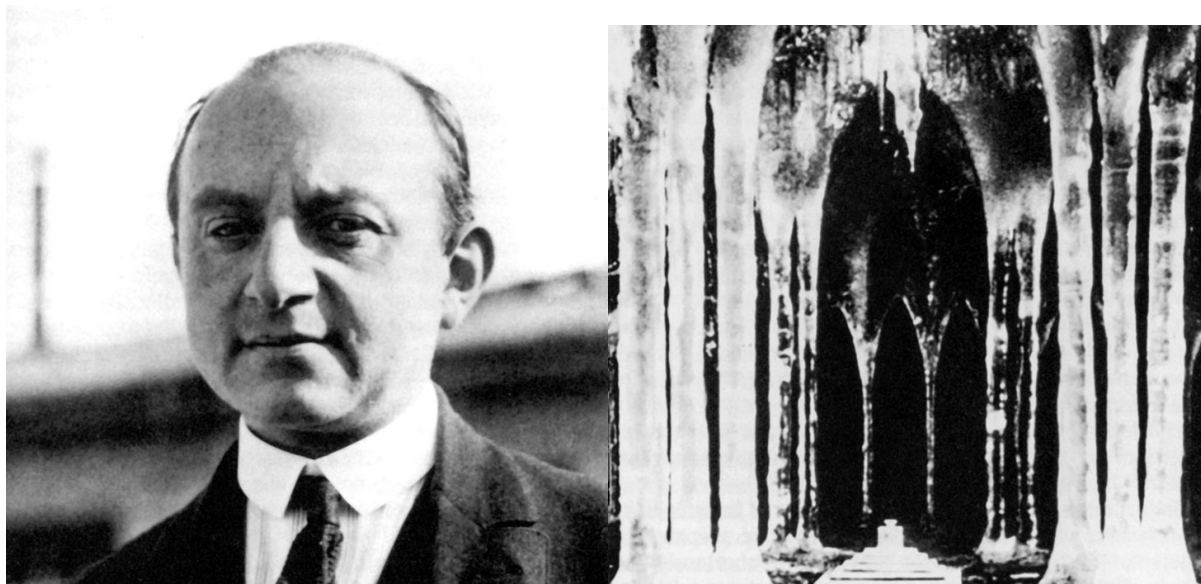
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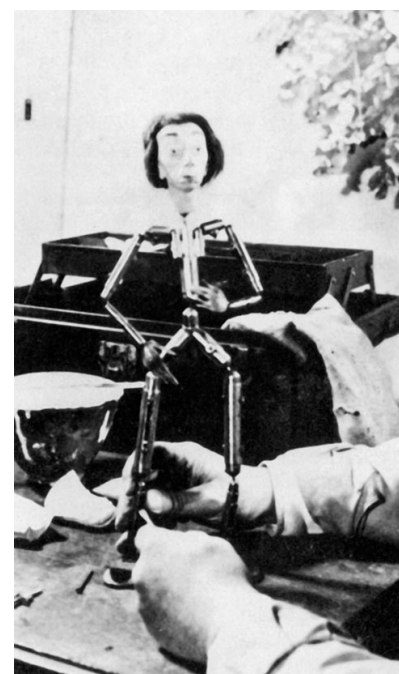
*Stop-motion animator Ferdinand Diehl examines a puppet armature made of lead. Along with brother Hermann — under whose supervision the puppets were constructed — Diehl established an independent studio for the sole production of stop-motion films. / The Diehls' most popular creation was Mecki the hedgehog, first introduced in 1937. / Der Flaschenteufel (The Bottle Imp), derived from a short story by Robert Louis Stevenson, was the third of three feature films produced by the Diehls, and the only one to employ hand puppets as well as stop-motion. / Ferdinand Diehl pauses briefly between exposures during the painstaking and time-consuming animation*

stop-motion animator must train himself to be entirely consumed by his work, as every artist must. He must have a sympathetic understanding of the puppet's character to animate it correctly. His concentration must be absolute. The cartoon animator is able to control the movement by flipping his drawings, whereas the puppet animator cannot control subsequently what he had done previously. The puppet animator has to memorize each preceding frame in his mind. Once I had to work with sixty puppets simultaneously. For me, this work was very fine and very healthy. Here one learns best to concentrate truly. Usually, though, they had to hold me fast between exposures, because several times I walked right into the shot. My concentration on the animation was so intense that I had forgotten all about the shooting technique."

When the National Socialist Party came to power in Germany, film fantasy became fatally identified with productions of the hapless Weimar Republic of the Twenties — an era responsible for *Dr. Mabuse*, *Nosferatu* and *Alraune*. At a time when other American movies were still allowed in German cinemas, some of Hollywood's finest fantastic films — *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Invisible Man*, for example — were forbidden. Others such as *King Kong* were butchered and reconfigured. After 1933, few fantasy-oriented German movies were produced, drastically reducing the challenge — or need — for effects technicians.

In fact, only one movie fantasy was produced in Nazi Germany during World War II — *Munchhausen*, the story of a mythical 18th-century baron noted for his tall tales, which was made to celebrate the silver anniversary of UFA. Before production commenced, agents of Joseph Goebbels — Hitler's minister of propaganda who oversaw all film production within the Third Reich — procured such films as Alexander Korda's *The Thief of Bagdad* and others by Walt Disney for careful study as *Munchhausen*, photographed in Agfacolor, would require numerous special effects to represent its fantastic fables. In the relatively short span of ten months, such illusions as the baron's famous cannonball ride to Constantinople and a balloon trip to the moon were rendered under the supervision of effects photographer Konstantin Tschetwerikoff — who by then had adopted the name Konstantin Irmen-Tschet — and his close associate Werner Krien. Optical postproduction, wherein effects were produced for a super-speed man and a rifle capable of sighting and shooting at a distance of two hundred kilometers, was in the expert hands of Theodor Nischwitz.

In his efforts to achieve the film's optical effects, Nischwitz

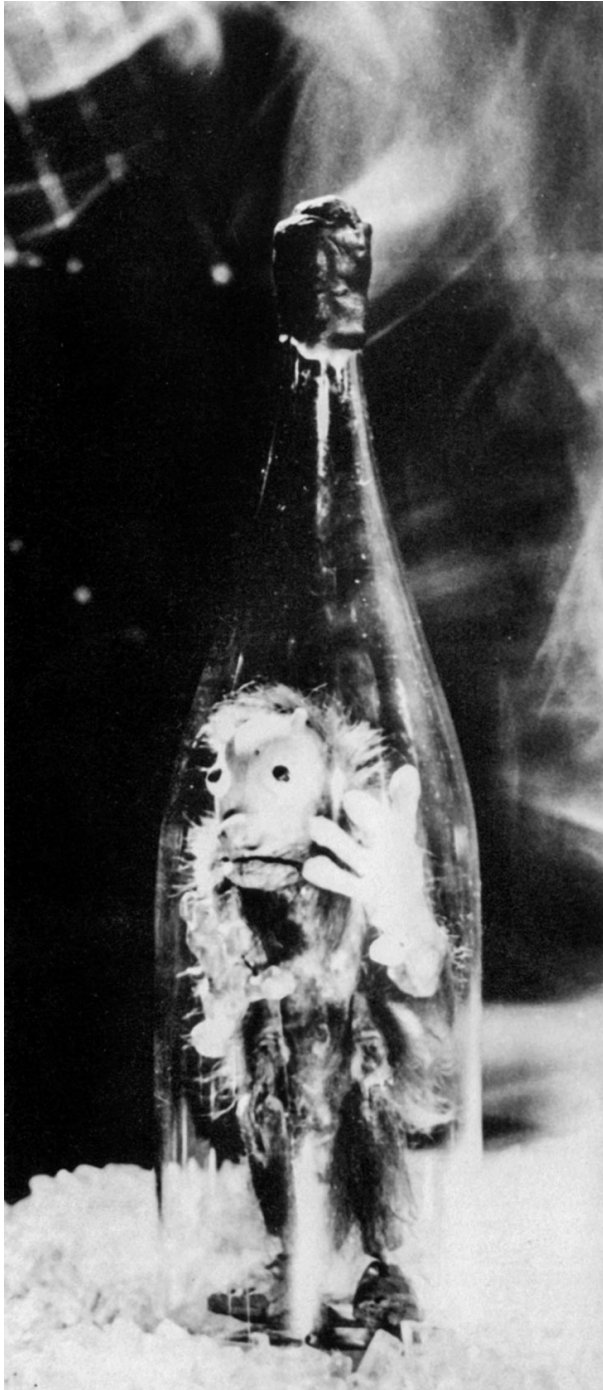


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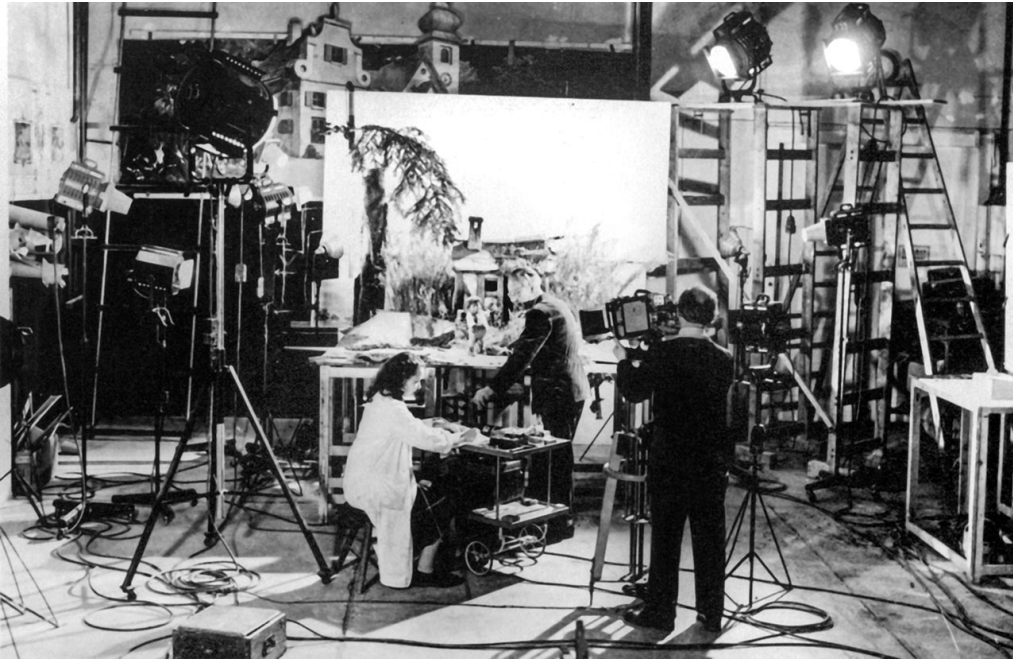
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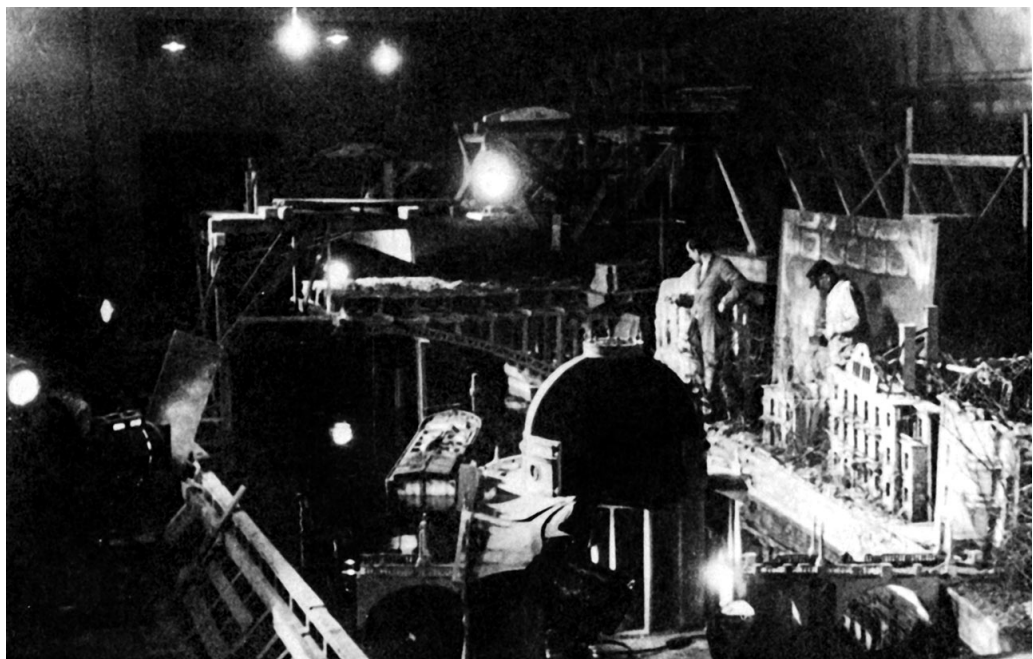


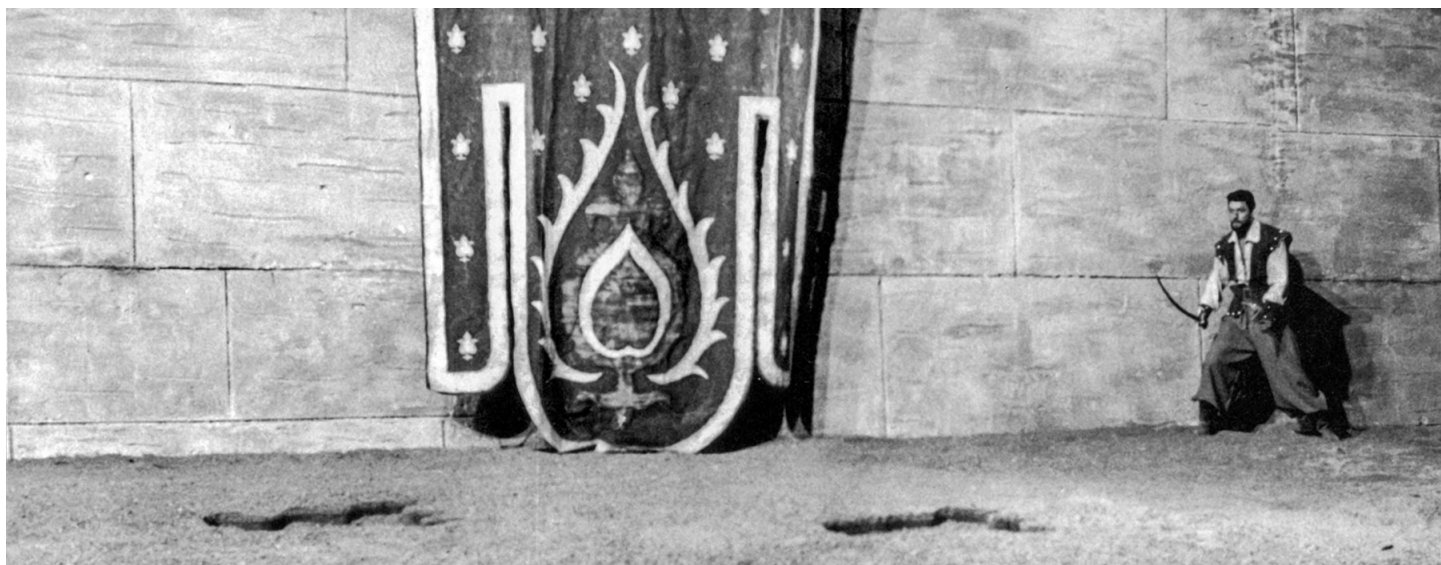


CINEFEX 25









East Germany's first science fiction picture, *Der schweigende Stern* (*First Spaceship on Venus*), produced in 1959 from a novel by Stanislaw Lem. His assistant on that picture was his daughter, Vera Kunstmann, who succeeded her father when he retired after fifty years in the movie industry.

While Kunstmann stayed at DEFA, Theo Nischwitz went to Munich to work for Bavaria Studios. "Bavaria Studios always had a small trick department," said Nischwitz. "During the war, the late Erich Brandes was in charge. His department consisted only of a Truca, an animation stand, two assistants and a splicer. The first to order effects shots after World War II was a German newsreel company that wanted only a few simple opticals and some titles. After that, we started to work on features so that our little department could enlarge. In those miserable years we worked for a pack of cigarettes, so to speak. My first feature for Bavaria was *Der Herr vom andern Stern* (*The Man from Another Star*) in 1948. Heinz Ruhmann starred as an alien who had to make a forced landing on earth. We decided to do these scenes as a combination of animation and optical effects." Another Heinz Ruhmann picture Nischwitz worked on was *Ein Mann geht durch die Wand* (*The Man Who Walked Through the Wall*), directed by Ladislao Vajda in 1959. Shots of Ruhmann walking through walls were achieved by a simple, but effective, split-screen technique. And in 1960 there was the successful *Das Spukschloss im Spessart* (*The Spook Castle in Spessart*) by Kurt Hoffmann. At first the producers were uncertain if they should create the numerous ghost effects by using traveling mattes or attempt a simpler procedure. Nischwitz argued for superimpositions and won out over his colleague Karl Ludwig Ruppel, who had established himself as Germany's leading traveling matte specialist and who, quite naturally, had wanted to do the effects his own way.

Ruppel had become associated with traveling mattes in 1956 while working on the World War II drama *Der Stern von Afrika* (*The Star of Africa*). "Our first tests for that picture were done with a foreign laboratory," explained Ruppel. "When Alfred Weidenmann, the director, saw the rushes, he asked, 'Could I have this scene perhaps without matte lines?' Indeed we had made every mistake possible. So we called in Victor Margutti, the traveling matte expert from Rank in England. He immediately came with his set of filters and helped us to manage our problems." Margutti and Ruppel became close associates. Margutti held a patent for black-and-white traveling mattes produced on Eastmancolor negative stock photographed in front of a selective blue backing, and in 1960 — together with Ruppel



Director Wolfgang Petersen — who has done much to reinstate the German film industry's position in the world market — pauses with the racing snail from his 1984 production of *The Neverending Story*, a film fantasy in which a young boy is drawn quite literally into a storybook adventure he is reading. / Numerous fanciful creatures — including the enormous rockbiter — were to be found within the mythical empire of *Fantasia*. / Like the rockbiter, *Morla* the mountain-sized swamp turtle was operated via animatronics devised and executed by Giuseppe Tortora and Ron Hone. / *Atreyu* (Noah Hathaway), the young warrior-hero of Petersen's tale, rides Falkor the flying luckdragon on his quest to save *Fantasia* from doom. / An army of technicians prepare to



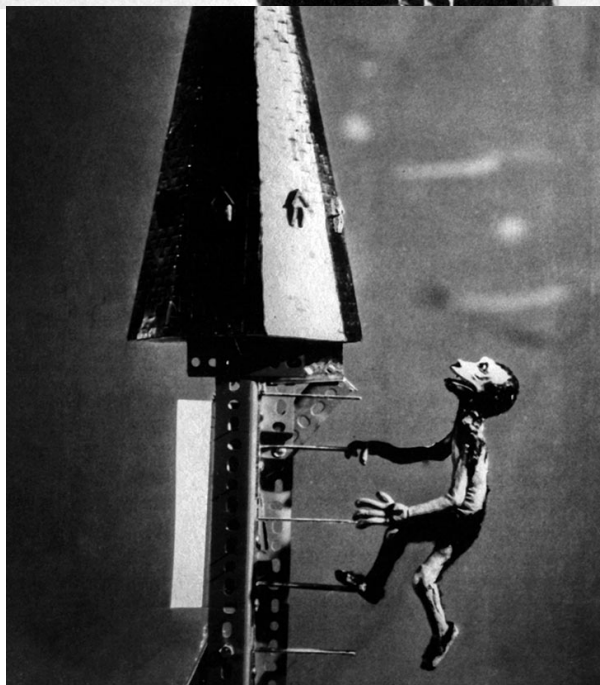
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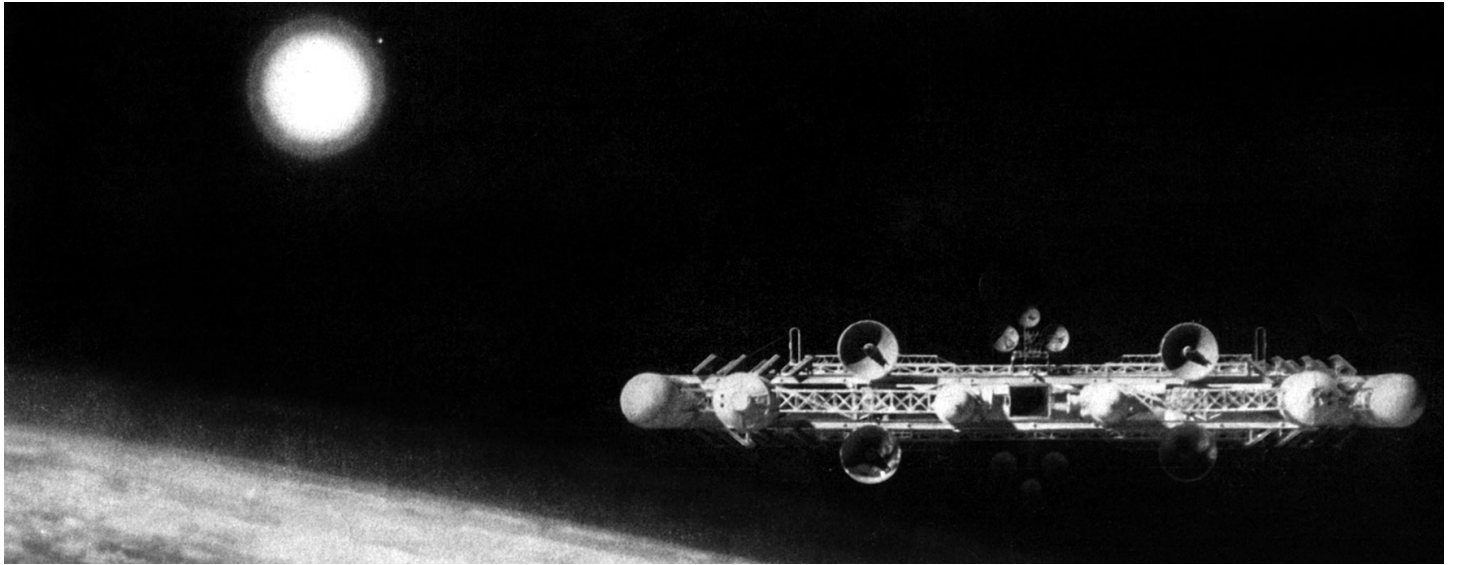
*Director Wolfgang Petersen — who has done much to reinstate the German film industry's position in the world market — pauses with the racing snail from his 1984 production of The Neverending Story, a film*













*Writer-director Tom Holland makes his intentions clear during a Fright Night storyboard conference at Richard Edlund's Boss Film Corporation. Visual effects for the contemporary vampire yarn — involving an ordinary teenager who uncovers some extraordinary goings-on when a mysterious stranger moves in next door — featured some well-placed opticals and an abundance of creature shop creations. / One of the film's more subtle illusions passes by virtually unnoticed — a Matthew Yuricich matte painting used to conceal a soundstage and other extraneous buildings on the Disney backlot. / As composited, the painting extends the studio street*

room window where a late-night horror show flickers in the dark. The wolf's howl, it seems, was merely an echo from the soundtrack of a vintage vampire film going unwatched by Charley (William Ragsdale) and his girlfriend Amy (Amanda Bearse) who are otherwise engaged. The entire minute-and-a-half scene — from moon to neighborhood to bedroom window — was achieved by means of a realistic matte shot engineered by effects director of photography Neil Krepela and veteran matte artist Matthew Yuricich. "The film's opening matte shot runs about 150 feet," said Krepela, "which makes it the longest one I've ever done — and it was really kind of stretching things. The moon was actually a high-quality photograph from the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, printed from a big plate that had been shot right off their telescope. It was an old photograph, but still showed incredible detail — you could see craters and even topographical relief on the horizon. The scene was shot using a multiplane technique, with the moon frontlit on the back plane and cotton clouds on a separate piece of glass that moved slowly across in front. We had to illuminate the clouds very carefully so that they looked as if they were being lit by the moon. Both elements were shot together on the Compsy camera. Afterwards we diffused the whole thing quite a bit, and also separated it with a little red. The shot then goes into a brief section of black before coming to our large matte painting — which is also black at the very top."

The five-and-a-half foot matte painting — designed to replace extraneous buildings in the plate with a view of Charley's nonexistent home town — was rendered by Yuricich, while the live-action plate was filmed by Krepela on the Disney backlot. Using a 65mm camera on a Titan crane, Krepela started shooting what was essentially a locked-off image. He then began moving the camera in very slowly to create a point-of-view shot, suggesting a hunting or searching action on the part of the vampire. "The main problem we had," said Yuricich, "was being able to tie the move used for the live-action footage in with the move done on the matte painting. We used to do similar things years ago with aerial image, but Neil is now doing it with the Compsy, where he can repeat his moves, making the process somewhat easier. We really had to work together on the painting. I painted and changed things a number of times. It was almost a 'design-as-you-go' matte painting."

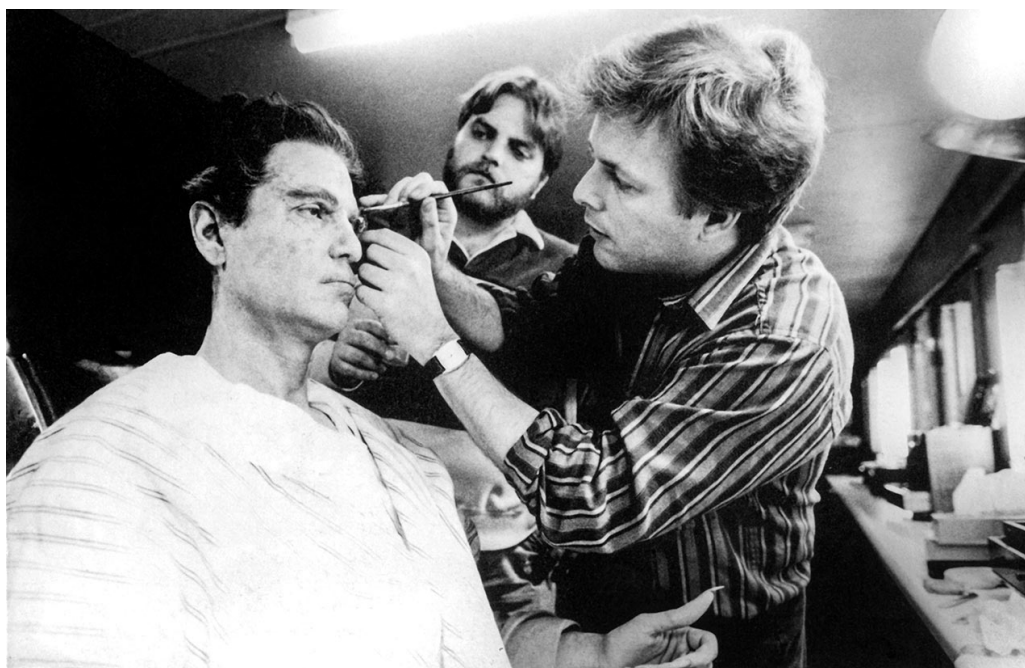
To aid in a seamless transition from the moon and clouds to the matte painting of Charley's street, Krepela added a foreground tree blowing in the breeze. "We shot the tree against a blue sky, and there was just enough contrast between the sky and the tree to make a black-and-white matte. Once I had the camera move worked out, I was able to take that matte and rear-project it exactly where it needed to be on the painting. Then it was shot on black-and-white film to make a silhouette which was binacked in the camera as the painting and the rest of

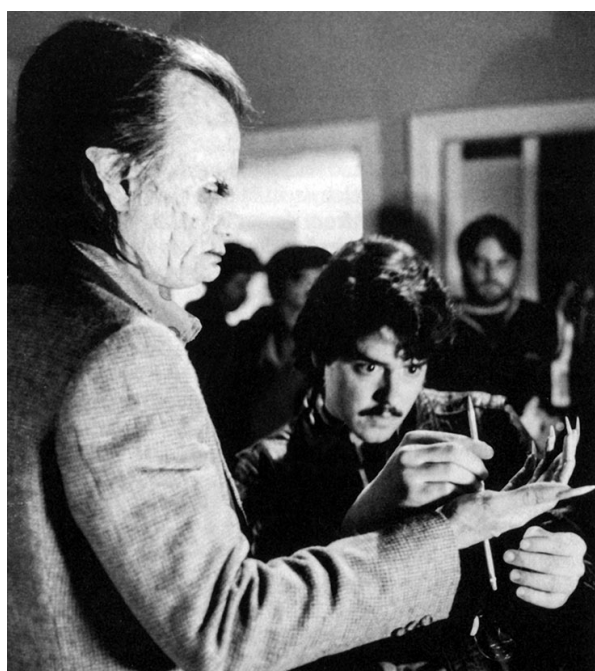












across the painting — an additional painted foreground tree slides by in multiplane — and onto a rear-projected live-action plate which takes the audience into Charley's room. "We didn't dissolve at all," said Krepela. "We stayed with the RP all the way through. What made it work was that we used separations — although we didn't do it in the normal way. First of all, we used a special low-grain separation stock which worked fine for our purposes because it was a low-contrast scene. Then we did the actual shooting in six passes rather than three. That way we broke each record into two separate exposures. Between each one, we changed the position of our rear screen so that we weren't photographing the same screen texture from exposure to exposure. What most people do is project a color print and shoot only one pass. To really do it right, though, you have to go to the trouble of making a contrast matte when you're making the color print, to help lower the contrast. It is especially critical on a dark scene that the contrast be low. Then, since you're going to have to shoot the separations three times anyway, you might as well just increase them and shoot six. Since it's all shot motion control, what's another four hours in the dark?"

Soon after Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon) takes up residence on the quiet street — the Disney backlot was modified via a simple latent image matte painting for the daytime scenes — he effortlessly charms Charley's mother. Unfortunately, however, the gullible woman does not realize that her suave and appealing neighbor has a rather unattractive side as well. Whenever he loses his temper, Dandrige's physical appearance reflects his inner turmoil by becoming more and more bat-like. As a result, Sarandon had to spend long hours in the makeup chair where appliances were employed to transform him into something decidedly nonhuman. "As far as the face was concerned," explained creature designer Randall William Cook, "I based its design on one of my favorite creature makeups — John Barrymore's Mr. Hyde, which featured an extended skull, scraggly hair and long claw-like fingers. The sloping-back forehead, however — which worked so well for Barrymore — didn't work at all for Chris. He has this wonderful, noble cranium that Barrymore didn't have, which was interesting as it gave the makeup an entirely different look. In fact, Chris' high forehead almost worked at odds with the design. The makeup itself was actually a two-stage process. The first, or transitional, stage was comprised of a brow piece and a nose tip sculpted by Steve Neill. The rest of the effect was done with paint. The second stage included a pair of ears and a full one-piece, paper-thin mask — beautifully

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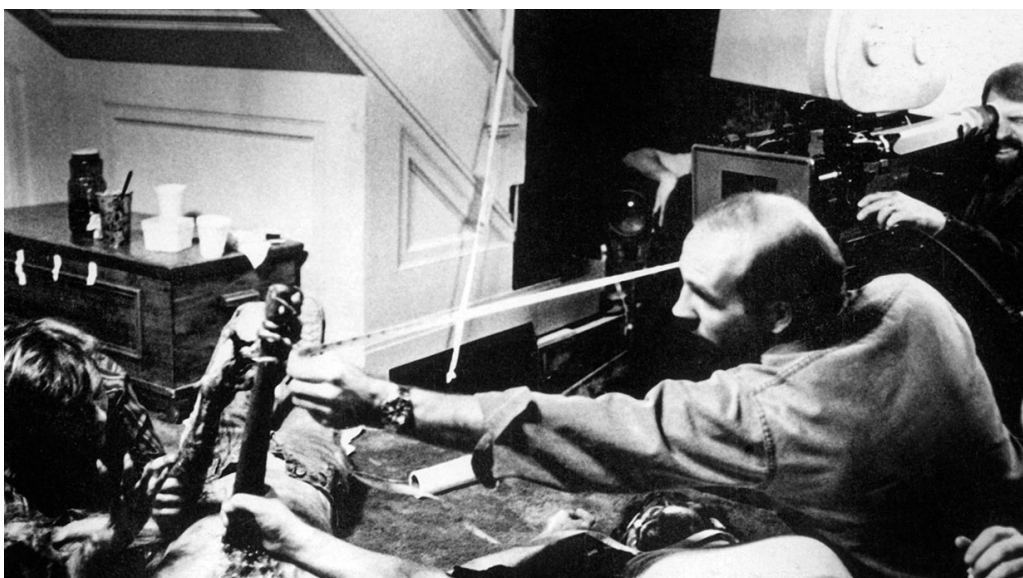
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CINEFEX :







by doing a quick cut of bulging eyeball and *Twilight Zone*. I had expected to see judicious treatment, but instead it was *and the poster*. Perhaps I'm a little to because I was in on its rather slapdash in but Tom didn't seem to think it was as decided to get a little more mileage out piece done over a casting of Amanda's face teeth that fit on *top* of her face and the appliance that fit over that. It was complete two days. Had I known that it was going screen time as it wound up doing, I would more carefully."

Evil Ed's induction into the world of the misfit teenager becoming Dandridge's Stephen Geoffreys' bizarre makeup was lenses, tooth extensions and, for the confronted by the now-faithful Peter Vincent the brand of a cross placed center forehead philosophy of not employing the same as vampire films, Holland wanted the cross to have a slightly different look. So rather tried and true illusion of sizzling flesh, they decided to melt the cross deep into Evil Neill began by sculpting a forehead approximately 3/4-inch at the thickest where the cross would be implanted — a to either side. Cigarette smoke blown through the effect, as did the application of El substance which offered the grisly suggestion adhering to the cross as it pulls away from

Later in the film, when Vincent flees search of help next door, Evil Ed manifests vampire guise, that of a wolf. John Bru designed the sequence taking full advantage and quick glimpses. "I storyboarded the *An American Werewolf in London*," Bru of people complained that while the transformation very good, shooting it in a brightly lit room of the rubber. John DeCuir had already designed the wolf transformation based on Tom Holland the scene so that Evil Ed leaps at Peter Vincent over the balcony, lands on the floor below the transformation in full light. The makeup was reduce the amount of light in the scene restructured it so that when the wolf gets hits a chandelier causing it to swing. ground, the wolf would at first be obscured chandelier. Then I asked John to redesign

*When Charley's girlfriend Amy (Amanda Bearse) succumbs to Dandridge's seductive persuasion, the innocent girl-next-door is transformed into a vampiric seductress. For this initial stage, Bearse underwent only minimal modification, including relatively conservative tooth extensions, a wig and breast enhancement. / The horribly exaggerated phase of Amy's transfiguration was designed by Randy Cook. The slaving, oversized mouth appliance — intended for only a brief shock-cut — ultimately received substantial screen time. / Billy Cole, Dandridge's unsavory sidekick, gets his filmic comeuppance by slowly dissolving into basic skeletal form. To achieve the effect, a rubber and multicolored gelatin mockup of actor Jonathan Stark was placed beneath blazing heat guns and photographed in front of a blue screen with a modified time-lapse approach. / The torso was designed with access from the rear so the primary head moves could be executed in hand-puppet fashion while numerous cable and rod operators supplied additional articulations. / As finally*

wanted it to melt. The head was actually made of rubber for the most part — which we cut away in sections and then recast the missing portions in gelatin, blending the two together. And, worried that we'd have a *House of Wax* effect if we used just straight gelatin, we decided to go for a multicolored and varying consistency of gelatin. It was animated with rods and cables — and with the hand of fearless puppeteer Mark Wilson, who wound up withstanding some pretty tropical weather as there were a couple of heat guns aimed at him to melt the gelatin, which of course globbed all over him in the process. Bill Neil shot it against a blue screen at twelve frames a second rather than at a very, *very* low rate of speed. It just seemed better to make it happen twice as fast rather than six, seven or eight times as fast." Once completed, the bluescreen time-lapse material was turned over to optical supervisor Mark Vargo and his crew who flawlessly composited it with the live-action background plate shot at Laird International.

The cinematic transformation of a human being into an altogether different form inevitably introduces the risk of compromising the credibility of the scene and interrupting the flow of narrative. For Richard Edlund, the inherent difficulties were a consideration early on. "*Fright Night's* effects are basically a series of 'transformation' shots, which I never like. We're always looking for novel means of dealing with them, to achieve the shots in ways that have not been used before. What generally happens when you turn a man into a bat — or a werewolf, if you remember the old Lon Chaney movies — is that the film is going along and suddenly there's a transition where you detach yourself from the movie to watch the change. The problem with that, of course, is that the audience immediately gets out their magnifying glass. If the transformation is not done peerlessly or unexpectedly, then the drama is stopped short and the effect is invariably a failure."

Early in *Fright Night*, Dandridge turns into a bat and flies over Charley's head. The problems of transformation were avoided entirely in this case, with the shot being filmed on a crane from the bat's point of view. Later in the movie, however, Holland wanted to actually show Dandridge transform into a bat and attack Peter Vincent. In keeping with his philosophy of not wanting to slow the action, Edlund — along with John Bruno — designed a transformation shot so fast and smooth as to be almost a throwaway. "We tried to think as simply and economically as possible when designing the shot," commented Bruno, "so we came up with the idea of having Chris Sarandon's stunt double leap off the balcony and then pan off him to see the transformation happen as an animated shadow on the wall. The shadow would then gain out of frame and the bat would move past us in the foreground."

To shoot the effect, BFC mechanical effects supervisor Thaine



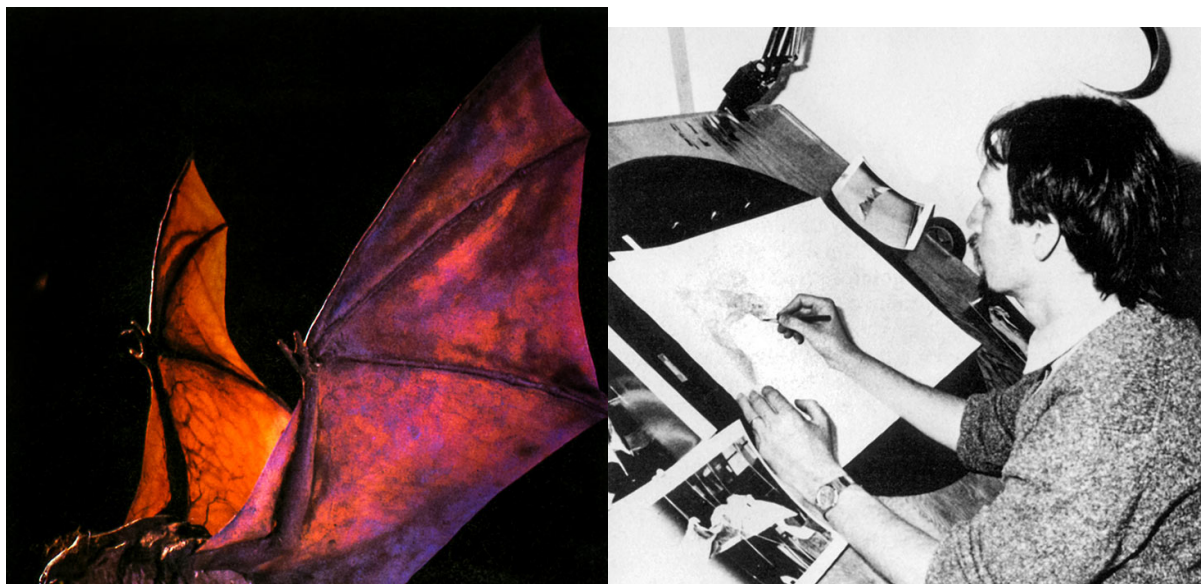












Puppeteers Mark Wilson and Randy Cook initiate a bat attack on 'vampire killer' Peter Vincent (Roddy MacDowall) during principal photography at Laird International Studios. / While struggling to assist Vincent, Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale) suffers a vicious bite. The creature's main motivation was provided by Cook, while an eight-member rod and cable team operated its facial expressions, arms and wings. / Peter Vincent valiantly resists the monster's terrifying assault. / Randy Cook positions the marionette's wings prior to a bluescreen run. / Effects director of photography Bill

fully to make it look as if he were in peril. Of course, the only real danger was that my hand might collapse and strangle him."

Because of *Fright Night*'s low effects budget, Holland decided to reserve the majority of his optical trickery for the final, climactic twenty minutes. The momentum builds and builds until it literally explodes as Charley and Peter do battle with Dandrige and Amy, ultimately vanquishing the vampire for good and restoring Amy to her former sweet self. But before his eventual defeat, Dandrige gives the film's protagonists a run for their money. As a stake is about to be pounded through his heart, he rises up in his coffin. "In the original *Nosferatu*," explained John Bruno, "the vampire rises up at the end, too. That old-time effect was done by having the actor fall backwards and reversing the film. In *Fright Night*, it was done the same way. We filmed Chris Sarandon falling into the coffin and then reversed it. At that stage, Dandrige's face is completely burned since he was hit by light when flying down the hallway as a bat. Another appliance was added on top of his second stage makeup to create the burned look."

That minor encounter with sunlight was only a precursor to the fatal beam that ultimately strikes the vampire, picks him up, hurls him through the air, slams him into a wall and burns him to a crisp. The shaft of light that first hits Dandrige and knocks him out of frame was an animated beam. To actually propel him through the air, however, a stuntman stood on an air ram which threw him fifteen to twenty feet backwards. Then animation supervisor Garry Waller painstakingly match-moved a green flame with Dandrige, rotoscoping the movement frame-by-frame so the flame looked as if it were attached to the actor's chest.

The next cut, in which Dandrige shoots backwards through frame, required the most elaborate setup of the sequence. "To execute the shot," said Bruno, "a 75-foot-long track was constructed and a ten-foot platform was placed on top of it. On the platform, we put a camera dolly. We wanted Dandrige to move slightly ahead of us during the course of the shot; so as the platform was being pushed forward, we dollyed the camera back three or four feet during the move. The shot was originally designed for a stuntman who would actually be set on fire; but because we were so close to the actor, we had to use Chris Sarandon — which meant that we had to add the fire optically. On the platform, we had a 10K shining on Chris to represent the beam that's pushing him against the wall. Behind him were two large fans blowing his hair forward to help the illusion of his falling backwards. We did three takes at three different speeds



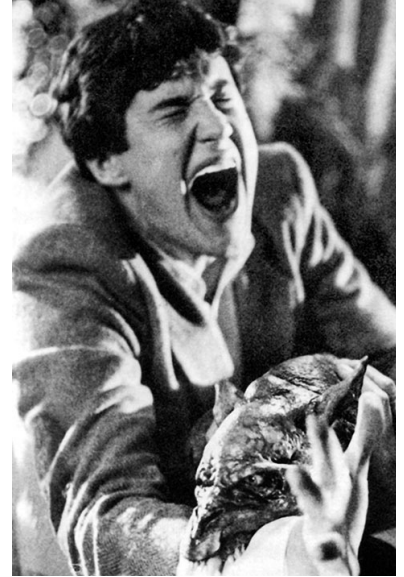


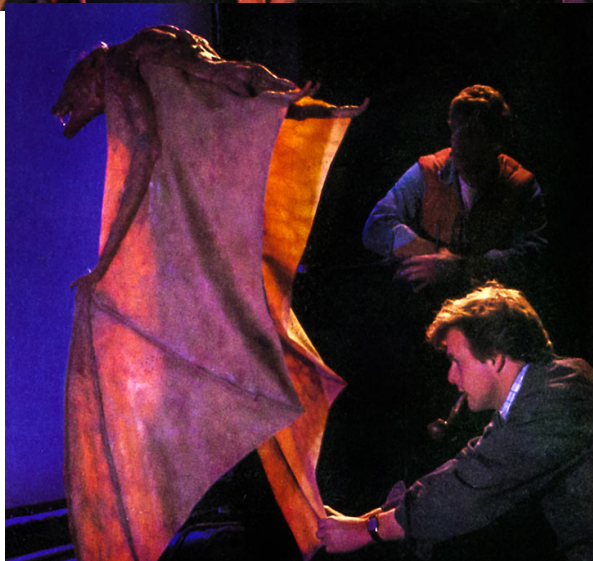
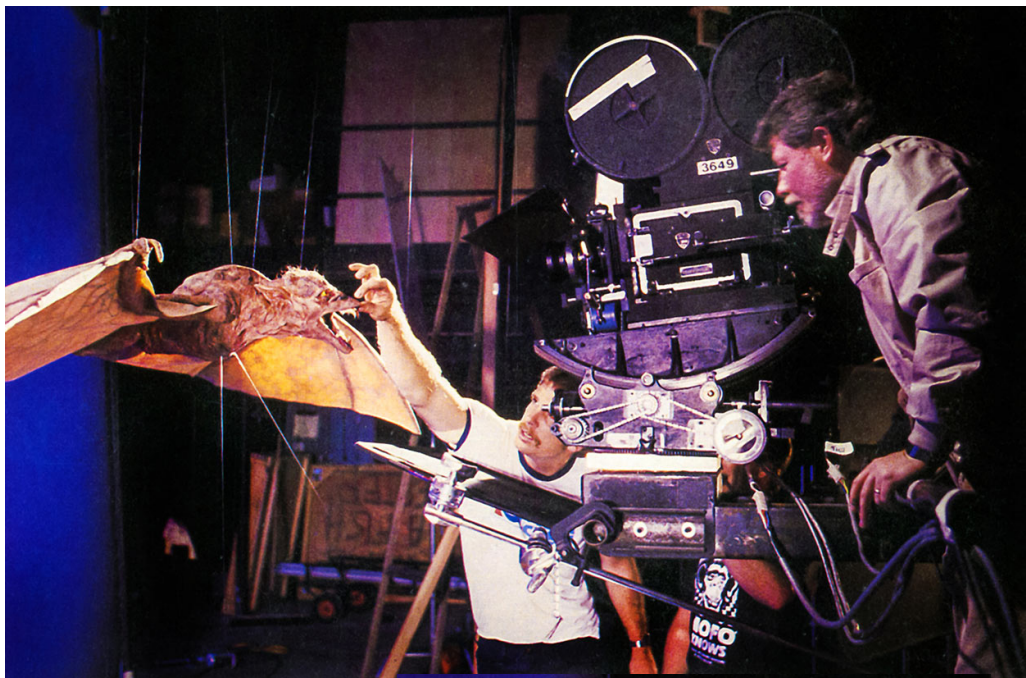
fully to make it look as if he were in peril. Of course, the only *real* danger was that my hand might collapse and strangle him."

Because of *Fright Night*'s low effects budget, Holland decided to reserve the majority of his optical trickery for the final, climactic twenty minutes. The momentum builds and builds until it literally explodes as Charley and Peter do battle with Dandrige and Amy, ultimately vanquishing the vampire for good and restoring Amy to her former sweet self. But before his eventual defeat, Dandrige gives the film's protagonists a run for their money. As a stake is about to be pounded through his heart, he rises up in his coffin. "In the original *Nosferatu*," explained John Bruno, "the vampire rises up at the end, too. That old-time effect was done by having the actor fall backwards and reversing the film. In *Fright Night*, it was done the same way. We filmed Chris Sarandon falling into the coffin and then reversed it. At that stage, Dandrige's face is completely burned since he was hit by light when flying down the hallway as a bat. Another appliance was added on top of his second stage makeup to create the burned look."

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Puppeteers Mark Wilson and













pops, then some magnesium powder that whites out everything."

The blast reduces Dandrige to a basic skeletal form which proceeds to writhe around on the wall before being vaporized. The plastic skeleton was conceived by Steve Johnson and John Bruno, then executed by Dale Brady. "Our intention in designing the skeleton," said Bruno, "was to imply that Dandrige was attempting to turn back into a bat but never makes it. It starts out as a normal human skeleton which then becomes more bat-like. We shortened its legs and extended the arms. The membrane burns away, the chest collapses and the head goes down. To make the skeleton, Richard asked Columbia to return the molds for the librarian ghost from *Ghostbusters*. It was her skull that punches through Dandrige's face and, oddly enough, it really resembled our bat."

Once the design was complete, Johnson appointed Mark Wilson and Makio Kida to build the creature. Then came the task of puppeteering the skeleton. "It was operated through a fireproof wall in our parking lot," Johnson explained, "and was capable of kicking around quite a lot. We had rotted skin built up all over it and ten organs inside the chest that pumped until it melted. We also hooked up flame jets inside the eyes and mouth so they could shoot long streams of fire. We mixed magnesium powder into melted wax, then brushed that compound over the bones to add some sparkle. The combination of our orange flame with the intense green flame that Thaine came up with turned out to be really interesting."

The live-action blaze eventually gives way to an optically induced fire blooming from the skeleton, which in turn disappears leaving behind a little bit of green flame requiring only minimal contributions from the optical department. "It was a pretty straightforward show as far as opticals were concerned," said Mark Vargo. "The bluescreen shots weren't as involved as they can be, and we got lucky because the shots usually went together on the first or second take and looked fantastic. Also, the show benefited from my experience on *Ghostbusters* and *2010*, because I was able to automatically plug in techniques that I'd spent quite a bit of time researching and employing on those films. I use about three different things for almost all bluescreen shots — some degree of diffusion, some degree of flash and some degree of focus change."

"Columbia really got their money's worth from us on this film," Edlund concluded. "My feeling with visual effects is that they work best when they're put in exactly the right place and not dwelt upon. You get more for your money if you design the show properly. The design attitude must be brought in immediately and the show shot around the effects so that the effects

*After surviving a woman's minor skin sunlight, I ultimately a steady si transform: blazing to Steve John Mark Wilsc the half-m skeleton u suggest th attempt at winged gu unholy sle as the film climax. To seared faci second sta makeup w with an ac flesh appli effects sup Morris rigs costumed pyrotechn vampire's scene. / A mechanic employed conflagrati the skeleton photograph*



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*After surviving a war with a woman in the sunlight, the Librarian ultimately transforms: blazing to the death. Steve Johnson, Mark Wilson, and the half-m*







